

I oppose the Jupiter wind turbine development as I believe the development approval process is damaging to the mental health of the affected community.

I have worked as a Social Worker for most of my adult life. As such, I have a high level of familiarity with mental health issues. I am concerned that the actual development process has the potential to adversely impact the mental health of individuals in the affected community.

I have observed a phalanx of powerful institutions aligned to push through the Jupiter wind turbine development:

- NSW political machine in the form of State Significant Development (SSD)
- NSW Department of Planning (DoPE) whose job it is to ensure SSDs are given the 'green light'
- The developer, EPYC, who has huge power with financial backing from a big international company, seeking the quickest most economical route to a successful development
- Financial resources that fund employees of the above institutions as well as expertise

On the other hand, the affected community that opposes the development, has to:

- Volunteer time at the expense of jobs or on-farm work
- Develop and fund their own expertise
- Face the loss of their quality of life
- Live in limbo often for many years
- Stand up to people in positions of power
- Wade through 2,500 pages of often technical jargon
- Battle against a foregone conclusion eg NSW has never rejected a wind farm proposal
- Face the imbalance of financial power opposing a multi-million dollar company

While the community has banded together to do battle with these forces, there is also a sense of helplessness and hopelessness. No wind farm has yet been rejected in NSW. The developer has not shown willingness to properly consult or compromise. The Department gives with one hand and takes with the other. It agreed to an extended time for the EIS given it coincided with the Christmas/New Year holiday period, and then allowed key staff to be absent when the community needed them. However, I should add that I have been surprised and pleased that the Department has shown compassion over the effect of the Currandooley fire and has further extended the EIS submission time for those of us affected by the fire.

Developments such as this, take many years to go through their paces. In the case of Jupiter it has already been 4 years since Jupiter first started canvassing selected community members. During this time community cohesion has weakened due to friendship tensions as hosts and non-hosts grapple with the the conflict created by the divisive process. The EIS does not mention this. In the country, knowing one's neighbours and having a good working relationship with them is an important element of disaster management. This network has already broken down. And yet, none of this fallout during the development

approval process appears in the EIS. The EIS charts its course from the actual building of the turbines and associated infrastructure.

Neighbours have also experienced tensions with their city friends, due to misunderstandings around support for renewable energy. Some city folk see our opposition to the Jupiter wind turbine project as opposition of renewables. This is not the case as solar panels on our rooftops attest. However, explaining the nuances of the development can appear simply NIMBY (not in my backyard), when it is far more complex. So not only do residents opposing the development lose friends who have become hosts, they also lose city friendships.

The community is left with a feeling that it has no allies. Whatever gains made by the community have been the result of a huge amount of time and effort. One example of this in relation to EPYC is our request to see the detailed letter of rejection of their first EIS by the Department. EPYC refused this request and we had to put in a freedom of information request to read the letter. Time, energy, frustration. In relation to the Department, it took a great deal of community effort to pressure the Department to instigate the Community Consultative Committee (CCC) in line with their own Guidelines. This was the first time in NSW this had happened rather than allowing the developer to form a pro-development Committee.

A further burden on the affected community is the amount of time needed to properly assess the impact of the development. I am aware of people who spend all of their time researching how to protect our community from the impacts of this development. The EIS document for example is a huge challenge to the affected community. The EIS is approximately 2,500 pages of often technical language. The community has been given a mere 11 weeks to read, digest, interpret and critique this document that has taken EPYC and its consultants years to write. I am aware of people who are neglecting responsibilities to work, family, farms, in order to build careful submissions to defend our quality of life. The need to devote this level of energy into opposing the development was not invited, is not paid for, but is necessary to ensure we are not rail roaded by the perfect storm of politicians, government and business.

I attend CCC meetings as an observer. I worry about the stress levels of our appointed community CCC representatives as the atmosphere in the meetings is toxic. While the Chair is generally fair, EPYC officers regularly refuse to answer questions the community has asked our CCC representatives to ask. The EPYC spokesperson shows barely disguised contempt for the community representatives opposing the development. The Chair of the CCC frequently shows frustration with the company. EPYC officers try to discredit RAJwt (Residents Against Jupiter wind turbines) in our efforts to inform the community about what's happening. I can see our representatives trying to stay calm in this frustrating and adversarial atmosphere. I know that at least some of our CCC representatives feel as though they're letting us down as they're unable to make much headway with the company. If the project goes ahead, they think the community will think they've failed in their responsibility to the affected community. They know how hard RAJwt people have worked. They're stuck between a rock and a hard place. It's easy to understand how helpless they might feel.

I know of one member in the community who has been unable to settle into the house they built. That person fears 'connecting' with the house of their dreams as if the wind turbine development goes ahead, they will be unable to live there.

Others, especially those who have built a house using their end of life savings, worry about their future. Their dilemma is that they've poured their savings into this property, they fear the affects of the wind turbines on their health might mean they have to leave, and they know they'll lose value (if indeed they're able to sell) on their property. These are real fears and are causing anxiety and depression in some members of the community.

At a time when governments both state and federal are turning their attention to mental health issues in the country this is one that is slipping beneath the radar. Both the EIS and the consultation process are deficient in not taking any interest in the mental health impacts on the affected community. Mental health is mentioned in the EIS only in relation to noise impacts. The EIS does not take a broad enough view of mental health issues during the phase up to approval of the development.